

REMARKS

Claims 1, 7, 13, and 19 are amended herein and new claims 21-23 are added. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration of the outstanding office action is respectfully requested.

The Office has rejected claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,816,884 to Summers (Summers) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,619,648 to Canale et al. (Canale). In particular, the Office asserts that Summers discloses a system that selectively filters email messages and creates a digest to be delivered to users, but does not explicitly state the use of a sender-independent message-based rule when selecting a candidate message. However, the Office asserts that email filtering rules are sender-independent are well known in the art as evidenced by Canale, which explicitly discloses filtering based on a sender-independent message-based rule when receiving the message from the network. Thus, the Office asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to modify the system of Summers by adding the ability to select one or more candidate messages from a plurality of electronic messages based on one or more sender-independent message-based rules as provided by Canale. (See Summers, col. 12, lines 40-64 and Canale, col. 2, lines 11-18).

However, neither Summers nor Canale, alone or in combination, teach to obtain "a plurality of digests from an information stream comprising a plurality of candidate messages by allowing a user to specify a set of one or more sender-independent message-based rules for each digest, wherein each set of one or more sender-independent message-based rules specifies one or more characteristics of the candidate messages," to select "one or more of the plurality of candidate messages in the information stream that satisfy all of the rules"; to determine "for each of the selected candidate messages, which of the plurality of digests corresponds to the set of sender-independent message-based rules satisfied by the particular selected candidate message", and to integrate "each of the selected candidate messages into their respective corresponding digests" as is recited in the claims.

Summers relates generally to selectively filtering incoming mail messages. According to Summers, a user may specify a desired message format and frequency for receiving e-mail messages from a discussion group. (Abstract). For example, Summers

discloses that user preferences may include how often the digests are sent, which email address the digests should be sent to, whether the user wishes to have the digests sent to them as email messages or instead read them on a web page, whether the users wishes to receive HTML content, whether the user wishes to receive attachments (graphics files, other multimedia files or documents), and what margin the digest should be formatted for. (Col. 12, lines 13-25). However, as is correctly noted by the Office, Summers fails to disclose or suggest the use of a sender-independent message-based rule when selecting a candidate message. Moreover, Summers fails to disclose or suggest “allowing a user to specify a set of one or more sender-independent message-based rules for each digest, wherein each set of one or more sender-independent message-based rules specifies one or more characteristics of the candidate messages” within an information stream as is recited in the claims.

In addition, contrary to the Office’s assertions, Canale does not remedy the deficiencies of Summers stated above. Instead, Canale merely teaches standard message filtering techniques such as filtering incoming messages based on information about a recipient which is used to reduce the amount of junk e-mails received by the user. (col. 2, lines 12-23). For example, Canale discloses a system wherein a user who wishes to reduce the amount of junk e-mail he receives has a mail filter as part of his e-mail system. When an e-mail item is sent to the user’s address, the mail filter interprets a recipient specifier to determine whether mail item is to be provided to user. In interpreting the recipient specifier, the mail filter employs a user model, which is data that provides a model of the user. If the recipient description specifies a recipient which is of the same kind as that specified by user model, the mail filter adds the mail item to the filtered mail and informs the user via an interactive user mail interface that new mail has arrived. If the user model does not specify a recipient which is of the same kind specified by the recipient description, the mail filter looks to correspondent models to determine where to send the mail item. (Col. 3, lines 30-67). There is no suggestion whatsoever in Canale to obtain “a plurality of digests from an information stream comprising a plurality of candidate messages by allowing a user to specify a set of one or more sender-independent message-based rules for each digest, wherein each set of one or more sender-independent message-based rules specifies one or more characteristics of the candidate messages,” as is recited in the claims.

Referring to the specification of the application, the invention as claimed provides a digesting tool that allows a user to formulate rules for constructing a digest or sets of electronic messages, regardless of the options offered by the senders of those electronic messages or by the mailing list manager in the cases where messages come from a mailing list. The digesting tool allows the user full control over the digest format and frequency, independent of what might be offered by the original senders of the electronic messages. (Pg. 2, lines 28-35). Based on the user-defined rules, a digest management device determines if selection criteria for establishing a digest have been met. If, after a comparison of the incoming message to the rules, an electronic message in the incoming information stream meets one or more selection criteria, the digest management device, in cooperation with a digest information selection device, determines an appropriate digest to which the selected electronic message should be added. For example, a user may have established a plurality of different digests. Therefore, based on the rules governing the operation of the digest management device, different electronic messages can be routed for integration into different digests. If an incoming electronic message meets a predefined criteria for being added to an already existing digest, the incoming electronic message can be added to that digest. However, if a digest does not exist but an electronic message meets a given selection criteria, the digest management device can create a new digest which is stored in the digest storage device. This selected electronic message is then added to the new digest and the updated digest stored in the digest storage device. This process of scanning information streams for electronic messages that meet certain selection criteria continue until a trigger is met that forwards one or more digests to the user. (Pg. 8, lines 19-35). It would not have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to achieve these features based on the disclosures of Summers and Canale.

Therefore, because the teachings of Summers and Canale, alone or in combination, fail to render obvious the features of the invention as recited in the claims, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-23 are not unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) in view of Summers and Canale. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be reconsidered and withdrawn.

In view of all of the foregoing, Applicants submits that this case is in condition for allowance and such allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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